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UNCLAS HARARE 000698

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/S  
BRUSSELS FOR EU  
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JFRAZER

E. O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: The Honeymoon is Over -- CFU Dumped by the GOZ

Ref: a) Harare 239; b) Cape Town 76; c) Harare 267

1. Summary. The GOZ has been attempting to gain international support for its return to normalcy by showcasing its stage-managed "dialogue" with the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU). Now that the GOZ perceives no further advantage to playing up the supposed dialogue, the GOZ has unceremoniously dropped its photo-op accord with the farmers' group. End summary.

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GOZ Willing to Be Seen Romancing "The Enemy"...

2. In a move widely suspected to be a propaganda stunt in advance of recent decisions affecting renewed sanctions, the GOZ belatedly initiated a dialogue with the CFU in order to convince the Commonwealth and the international community that all is well in Zimbabwe (ref a). Although Nigeria's Obasanjo and South Africa's Mbeki apparently accepted the purported dialogue at face-value (ref b), and cited this in support of removing Zimbabwe's suspension from the Commonwealth, the GOZ's one-sided position left no room for the CFU to cooperate while maintaining any degree of credibility with its remaining membership (ref c).

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...But Only While It Remains Compliant

3. The CFU responded on April 4 with a request that the GOZ "reconsider their draft [MOU] so as to incorporate the basic principles of commercial agriculture as listed below, 1. Security of land tenure, 2. Law and Order, 3. Viability and Sustainability." The CFU further denied any implied "foreign-based influence," and proffered a "Document of Principles" encompassing "a practical proposition that requires the State to focus its policies on maximising production and development." With characteristic vitriol, Minister of Publicity Jonathon Moyo denounced the CFU as "unrepentant Rhodie farmers who are bent on becoming a law unto themselves." He further stated that "the whole issue has been overtaken by events on the ground and it's a pity that the CFU has missed an opportunity for dialogue by abusing it..."

4. Moyo also blasted the CFU as one of the "lawless elements" instrumental in organizing the mass stayaway on March 18 and 19. The irony of this accusation is that the CFU has steadfastly attempted to remain apolitical, sometimes to the point of inertia, and was one of the handful of businesses nationwide that did not shut down its offices during the stayaway, only an irrelevant fact to Moyo's vitriol.

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Comment

5. It is not surprising that the GOZ has so publicly denounced the CFU when no further benefit could be gained from the pretense at dialogue. However, this gambit might be premature in that the dialogue had been presented to SADC as evidence of progress in reining in the current Zimbabwean economic and political crises. If the SADC task force does manage to consult with all stakeholders during its visit in the next several weeks, a goal articulated by Mozambican Foreign Minister Leonardo Samao, the task force could get a much clearer indication of the reality on the ground than the GOZ intends. Whether this translates to resolve within the SADC community to finally take a principled stand remains to be seen. End comment.

Sullivan